

portions of report

HISTORICAL STUDY REPORT
FOR THE
PROPOSED SOUTH BAY BIKEWAY PROJECT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY
11-SD-5, PM 8.6/R10.0
11290-047970

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Historical archaeological site CA-SDi-8873H is within the Area of Potential Effects for alternatives under consideration for the South Bay Bikeway Project. The site does not appear to retain sufficient integrity to be eligible for listing on either the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	i
PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	1
RESEARCH METHODS.....	1
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW	2
SITE DESCRIPTION.....	6
RESEARCH ISSUES AND PREVIOUS HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY.....	7
SIGNIFICANCE FINDINGS	8
CONCLUSIONS	9
PREPARERS' QUALIFICATIONS.....	10
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 12
 MAP 1 - PROJECT VICINITY	 15
MAP 2 - PROJECT LOCATION.....	16
MAP 3 - AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS	17
 FIGURE 1 - CA-SDI-8873H SITE MAP.....	 18
FIGURE 2 - 1911 SANBORN MAP	19
FIGURE 3 - 1922 CHANBER OF COMMERCE LANDS.....	20
FIGURE 4 - 1980s CONSTRUCTION DETOUR.....	21
FIGURE 5 - 1949 AS-BUILT PLAN.....	22
FIGURE 6 - 1962 AS-BUILT PLAN.....	23
FIGURE 7 - 1984 AS0BUILT PLAN	24
 APPENDIX A - CA-SDi-8873H SITE RECORD.....	 25

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct the South Bay Bikeway parallel to Interstate Route 5 from 24th Street in National City to F Street in Chula Vista, San Diego County (Maps 1 and 2). The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project encompasses alternatives under consideration, including the Area of Direct Impact shown on Map 3.

The project area includes marshlands and portions of Paradise Creek and the Sweetwater River near their outlet into San Diego Bay. This report addresses historical archaeological site CA-SDi-8873H, a large scatter of mostly twentieth century refuse. Any other cultural resources which may be present in the project's APE will be addressed separately.

RESEARCH METHODS

On December 1, 1993, District 11 submitted a request for an Historical Study Report to be prepared for historical archaeological site CA-SDi-8873H, within the Area of Potential Effects for the proposed South Bay Bikeway construction project. In February 1994, Caltrans staff architectural historian Dorene Clement and staff historical archaeologist Judy D. Tordoff conducted a field visit to the site, accompanied by District 11 staff archaeologist Don Laylander. Research was undertaken in Sacramento and San Diego. Facilities used in the Sacramento area include the California State Library, State Office of Historic Preservation, Caltrans Transportation Library, and Caltrans Environmental Division library. In San Diego County, research was conducted in District 11 files, San Diego and Chula Vista offices of the San Diego County Assessor's Office, San Diego County Recorder's Office, and San Diego Public Library.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Written history of the area that would become San Diego County began in 1542 with the arrival of Portuguese explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, sailing under the Spanish flag. Sixty years later, Sebastian Vizcaino sailed into the bay and named it San Diego. California was then ignored by the Spanish until 1769. In that year, driven by ambitions for the expansion of New Spain, and fearful of challenges by other European powers and advancing Russian settlement, Spain moved to take control of California. Land and sea expeditions set off for California in early 1769, and the Spanish established missions, presidios, and pueblos in Alta California. The Spanish period lasted until 1821, when Mexico gained its independence, and in 1822 the Mexican flag was raised in San Diego. The Mexican period ended in 1846 with the American takeover, followed by statehood in 1850.

During the Spanish era, livestock ranches associated with presidios and not otherwise named were commonly called "rancho del rey" (the king's ranch). After Mexican independence, they became "rancho nacional" (national ranch). The ranch which served the San Diego mission and presidio kept that name when it was awarded in 1845 to English merchant Juan Forster as a land grant, Rancho de la Nacion (Gudde 1969:216). In 1868, brothers Frank, Warren, and Levi Kimball bought the 26,632-acre grant and built a new city in its northwest corner, which they named National City after the land grant. The Kimballs intended National City to compete with San Diego as a transportation center (Gudde 1969; Laylander 1993:9). They subdivided the property and built a wharf (Stein 1975:87-88).

The San Diego Land and Town Company laid out and named the neighboring city of Chula Vista in 1888. Founded as a real estate development and given the Spanish name for "handsome view," Chula Vista was one of the towns given promotional names by boosters and developers in the real estate boom of the 1880s (Gudde 1969:64-65; Marinacci and Marinacci 1980:21). The area was an agricultural center, known for its flowers, and it became important for citrus and celery growing (Stein 1975:28-29). Later, Chula Vista became a residential and industrial area, and a center for aircraft parts manufacture.

The traditional boundary between National City and Chula Vista was the Sweetwater River, named "Agua Dulce" (sweet water) in Spanish (Stein 1975:135). In 1888 the river was dammed eight miles to the east to provide a reliable water supply for National City and Chula Vista (Pryde 1992:123). The Sweetwater Dam created a reservoir which had a 9,000,000 gallon capacity in 1907, when National City's population was 1,250 (Sanborn 1907). By 1911, the dam had been raised, and as the population grew, it was raised again. In 1936, the Sweetwater Reservoir held 10 billion gallons of water (Sanborn 1911, 1926, 1936).

A private water company controlled the flow of the river and supplied water to National City and Chula Vista. The Sweetwater Water Company was incorporated in 1901, its stock almost wholly owned by the San Diego Land Company. When that company changed hands, the Sweetwater Water Company responded in 1920 by transferring its property to the newly formed Sweetwater Water Corporation (San Diego County Deeds Book 802:410+, 3/24/20).

In late January of 1916, heavy rains drenched San Diego County, filled the Sweetwater Reservoir, and sent water flowing over the top of the dam. A wing dam gave way, flooding the valleys and marshes downstream. Near the mouth of the river, the Sweetwater Water Company owned the marshlands including Paradise Marsh, which helped provided drainage and must have been seriously affected by the flooding (Pourade 1964:208-210).

As rivers overflowed, up to 20 people died in the flooding. The flood waters, combined with high winds, cut off communications and highways became impassable. Railroad lines were severed as bridges and embankments washed out with unbelievable suddenness (Pourade 1964:208-212).

The rail service destroyed by the floods had become essential to San Diego by the early twentieth century, but the rail network had not come easily. In the competition of the 1870s and 1880s among California coastal cities for rail connections to the east, San Diego trailed San Francisco and Los Angeles. The Kimball brothers, hoping to make National City the terminus of a southern route for a transcontinental railroad, negotiated with various lines, finally interesting Santa Fe in 1879. Frank Kimball agreed to raise money and turn over 10,000 acres of land, but a policy change at Santa Fe doomed the enterprise, turning the road in a more northerly direction (Heilbron 1936:428; Pourade 1965:47; Quastler 1992:170).

Less ambitious routes replaced the proposed transcontinental line. The California Southern was chartered in 1880, to run from National City to San Bernardino, and in 1885 it connected with the Santa Fe at Barstow. The San Diego and Arizona railroad incorporated in 1906, and was opened to Yuma in 1919.

Interurban lines also thrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The San Diego Land and Town Company, a subsidiary of Santa Fe, began construction of an interurban rail passenger line from San Diego to National City in 1887 and laid out a new subdivision at Chula Vista in 1888. Another interurban ran north from San Diego to La Jolla, and the Coronado Railroad came down the peninsula, around the southern end of San Diego Bay, and up to San Diego. The decline of San Diego's rail service came about with the increased role of highway transportation, and much of the system was abandoned by the 1920s (Heilbron 1936:429-430; Quastler 1992:173-74).

Paradise Marsh

CA-SDi-8873H is located on low-lying marshland drained by Paradise Creek and the Sweetwater River, bounded by Interstate 5 on the east and a railroad line, originally the Coronado Railroad, on the west (Figure 1). The northern end of the marsh was the disposal site for a commercial dump and junkyard located on the higher land just north of the present course of Paradise Creek where it emerges from a culvert west of Interstate 5. The business of the dump took place on the adjacent higher ground where refuse was gathered, salvageable materials removed, and the remainder burned. The burned debris was dumped into the marsh. This disposal site constitutes a portion of CA-SDi-8873H (see Site Description below).

Informal disposal of residential or industrial waste into the northern end of the marsh is likely to have occurred prior to establishment of the commercial dump. Some dumping may have also occurred in the southern part of the site, but no major sources have been discovered. The land north of Paradise Creek, on the other hand, is known to have held railroad shops and slaughterhouses adjacent to the marsh, and other industries nearby, including Frank Kimball's olive oil plant.

Railroad shops were the first known buildings constructed on the land which would later be the site of the dump operations. In 1911, the main line of the San Diego Southern Railway

Company, a steam and electric railway, ran along the closed-off 24th Street and turned north at the depot on the corner of 24th Street and 8th Avenue, continuing north up 8th Avenue. Shops included a roundhouse, electric car house, repair shop, machine shop, storage, oil and coal houses, and apparently additional support facilities on the adjacent parcel later occupied by George W. Hoskings' slaughterhouse. The facilities on that parcel included a corral, auto and buggy house, storage, meter shop, pipe storage, office and fuel oil tank. The area just south of the railroad shops, noted as "marsh" on a 1911 map, may have been a dumping ground for the shops' refuse, including toxic materials. (See Figure 2).

Slaughterhouses or meat packers were present on the higher ground next to the marsh from the late nineteenth century up through recent years. Such operations generate large quantities of organic wastes, including blood, entrails, and bone. The slaughterhouses grouped around the edge of the marsh probably chose this location for the ease of dumping waste into the adjacent swamp. Geo. S. Wright, meat packer, and Geo. W. Hoskings, meat packer, both had large operations along what is now Cleveland Avenue (see Figure 6), adjacent to the marsh. In 1926, Hoskings' business included hay shed, corrals, cold storage, abattoir, killing room, sausage factory, lard room, hide house, fertilizer house, boiler, and shipping room (Sanborn 1926).

In 1922, the Sweetwater Water Corporation applied for a resubdivision of the land containing much of Paradise Marsh, and land just to the north, overlooking Paradise Creek. The property within Chamber of Commerce Industrial Lands #1 was divided into three tracts, A, B, and C, from north to south. Tract A was high ground; B and C were largely marshland (see Figure 3). Tract A, on the rise overlooking Paradise Creek, consisted of 3.29 acres; Tract B was 21.8 acres; and Tract C, the most southerly and outside the National City city limits, held 9.85 acres. In 1934, George Dewey Graham and William Howard Mikkelson purchased Tract A from the Sweetwater Water Corporation (San Diego County Deeds Book 309:169, 7/5/34).

According to William Howard Mikkelson, his father Christian M. Mikkelson started a dump operation in the 1920s, at 24th Street and McKinley. Chris Mikkelson may have run the dump on a part-time basis, as he was listed as a driver for Jordan Transfer Company in the teens and twenties. Not until 1931 did city directories identify him as a rubbish collector. He apparently occupied the property which his son Howard and son-in-law George Graham later purchased as Tract A. (The younger Mikkelson used his middle name, and records identified him variously as William or Howard, and sometimes as both.)

Although Howard described the dump operation as his father's business, Chris Mikkelson's name did not reappear in connection with it after his son and son-in-law got involved. By the 1940s, Chris and Margaret Mikkelson were living in Chula Vista, no occupation listed. At the same time, another son, Elmer F. Mikkelson (also known as Forest E. Mikkelson), was listed as a scavenger, possibly working with his brother Howard and brother-in-law George Graham. Elmer and his wife Agnes also lived in Chula Vista (San Diego City and County Directories).

Howard worked as a chauffeur into the 1930s, then he and his brother-in-law purchased the Tract A land and joined in the dump business, listed as scavengers, garbage collectors, drivers,

or junk dealers in city directories. Refuse was apparently picked up by the Mikkelsons and Graham, which may have accounted for the use of the terms "trucker" and "scavenger" describing their occupation. Local residents also brought their trash to the site, primarily from the adjacent communities of Chula Vista, National City, and San Diego (DeCosta and Kupel 1981:6; Snyder 1982:3).

Once trash arrived, the dump operators sorted out usable items and scrap metal. They burned the rest of the material, then bulldozed it into the marsh. As deposits accumulated, they were graded and spread about (DeCosta and Kupel 1981:6; Snyder 1982:3). No buildings have been identified in association with the dump operation under the Mikkelsons or Graham, but it is likely that some form of shelter was constructed or brought in.

The business appears to have been both a junkyard and a dump. It operated until 1950, accordingly to Howard Mikkelson, who was appointed that year as superintendent of the city sanitation department. At that time, the entire disposal site was graded and leveled (DeCosta and Kupel 1981:6; Snyder 1982:3). George Graham continued to be listed as a scavenger in 1950, and in 1952 he went to work as a laborer for Ace Metal & Waste Company. That company either took over the existing junkyard or opened a new one on the site at 2404 McKinley. Lawrence E., James W., Warren W., and Calvin N. Humphries owned Ace Metal & Waste Co. They had been in operation as junk dealers in San Diego for some time before acquiring the additional location in National City (San Diego City and County Directories).

The business occupied about 2-1/2 acres on the higher ground, now partly under 24th Street and Interstate 5. In 1949, the State of California filed suit to acquire all or part of 37 parcels along the current Interstate 5 corridor under eminent domain for freeway purposes (San Diego County Deeds Book 3193:286, 11/5/49). Part of the original dump operation property, and the disposal site (CA-SDi-8873H, Locus A), were taken for highway construction. Restricted on the east by the adjacent railroad line, highway widening over the years has been westward, over the marsh. A temporary construction detour for the I-5/SR54 interchange in the 1980s swung out even farther into the marsh (Figure 4).

Site deposits have been subjected to additional disturbance by trenching of the marsh, marsh restoration efforts, recent trash dumping, off-road vehicle activities, and bottle collectors. Highway construction activities, flooding, and erosion have carried some of the deposits considerable distance from their original location.

To the south, within the city of Chula Vista, little evidence of potential sources for refuse deposits has been found. A cottonseed oil plant to the west on the edge of San Diego Bay, and a magnesite products company some distance to the south were the only industrial activities in the area shown on 1918 Sanborn maps. Neither plant was in easy dumping distance of the marsh. In 1926 the cottonseed oil plant remained, but the Chula Vista Airport had replaced the magnesite plant (Sanborn 1918, 1926).

As-Built drawings for the 1949 highway expansion project revealed a cultivated field and a frame house with several sheds and a large chicken coop fronting on the west side of Bay Boulevard, north of E Street. On the southeast corner of Bay and D Street, 604 Bay Blvd., Herbert E. Hunt operated a Union Service Station in the late 1940s. The only other identified use also dates from the late 1940s. On the south side of D Street, west of Bay, members of the Kromydas family manufactured cabinets in a concrete block factory at 710 D Street. From approximately 1947 to 1950, the Krome Cabinet Manufacturing Company built "leatherette covered cabinets, show cases, and kitchen cabinets" (California Department of Transportation 1949; San Diego City and County Directories). The house, service station, and factory were all removed for the 1949 highway project.

While the cabinet factory and the service station may have had occasion to dispose of some toxic materials into the marsh, their tenure was short lived and unlikely to have generated large quantities of durable waste. Less is known of the residence and its occupants, but the house appears to have been a rural residence which may have dumped trash into the nearest part of the marsh, which would now be under the freeway.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Site CA-SDi-8873H was first recorded in 1981 (DeCosta and Kupel 1981). Described as an historic trash dump, it consisted of three loci containing artifact concentrations between Interstate 5 to the east, the San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railroad (formerly the Coronado Railroad) to the west, the Sweetwater River to the south, and Paradise Creek to the north (Figure 1; Appendix A). Artifacts observed included milk glass, bleach bottles, pastel-colored ceramics, and perfume bottles, primarily from the 1930s. Other materials included amethyst sun-tinted glass and turn mold wine bottles dating from earlier in the century, post-1945 Japanese transfer-printed ceramics, and very recent trash (DeCosta and Kupel 1981:6; Laylander 1993).

As part of cultural resource studies for the Sweetwater Flood Control Channel Project, a Phase II investigation of the site was proposed (DeCosta and Kupel 1981; Kupel 1981). Excavations were underway when the investigation was terminated at the direction of the Office of Environmental Planning (Hagen 1981). An Historic Resource Evaluation Report was subsequently prepared (Snyder 1982) in which the research potential of the site was evaluated as insufficient to warrant continued study.

During the Phase II study, several bags of artifacts were recovered before excavation was terminated. Materials were not processed and have been retained in storage at the District 11 archaeological facility. Recent examination of those materials shows several shopping bags full of small pieces of glass, ceramics, metal and other items, mixed with large quantities of gravel.

By 1990, Locus B was no longer visible, the victim of I-5 modifications (Laylander 1993:14). An updated site record was prepared in 1993 (Appendix A). Horizontal boundaries were defined on the basis of surface observation of the two remaining artifact concentrations: one just south of 24th Street, adjacent to and west of I-5; and one to the south by the Sweetwater River, again adjacent to I-5 (Figure 1). Vertical boundaries in 1981 were observed in the Paradise Creek channel to be up to 65 cm below the ground surface. No such observation was made in 1993.

The most recent trip to the site revealed similar artifact distribution. At the north end of the site (Locus A) artifacts were scattered on a narrow strip of solid ground south of Paradise Creek and adjacent to the Highway 5 fill embankment. Most were small glass and ceramic fragments that appeared to date from the 1940s and 1950s. A certain amount of considerably more recent trash had also been dumped in the more marshy areas to the west. The second concentration of surface artifacts was observed just south of the current Sweetwater Channel in an even narrower strip of land adjacent to Highway 5. The same kinds of materials were present in this area, but less modern trash was apparent.

The currently identified site area is considerably smaller than that identified in 1981. Nevertheless, the first major impact to the site was probably in 1949, when Highway 5 was constructed along the existing Bay Boulevard (Figure 5). That project included adding extra lanes west of the boulevard, plus an undercrossing and underpass at 24th Street. In 1962, further improvements to the highway, still State Highway 2, involved the creation of massive embankments both east and west of the roadway (Figure 6), which buried at least some of the deposits dumped by the businesses above the marsh.

The 1980s brought major changes to the route, including the channelization of the Sweetwater River, wetlands restoration, and additional work on the highway itself, now Interstate 5 (Figure 7). In addition to disturbance caused by highway construction projects, the Sweetwater River project created dredge spoils which were dumped as fill along the new banks. Wetlands restoration work has been undertaken at the northern end of the marshlands, and the south end is now a National Wildlife Refuge. The landscape has changed so much that Caltrans archaeologists are no longer able to recognize the location of the testing program that was begun in 1981.

RESEARCH ISSUES AND PREVIOUS HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The value of archaeological research on large urban refuse deposits has not always been recognized. Through the pioneering work of William Rathje (1974, 1979, 1984) and others (Deetz 1977), however, a number of research issues addressable by archaeological data from these resources have been identified and pursued. Consumer patterns, patterns of waste disposal, and site formation processes have been studied, in addition to the somewhat more pressing contemporary issues of material decomposition rates and survival, and local

contamination problems. Some of this work has required the identification of units of association, such as the neighborhood or household. Other studies have worked with much larger units, such as the city as a whole (Blee 1991; Van Wormer 1991)

In the archaeological research design and treatment plan for the San Francisco 480 Terminal Separation Rebuild project the potential of working with fill material is discussed in relation to the research themes identified for that project (Yentsch 1993:331-345). Included are questions on the study of economic consumption and marketing, household activities, urban geography, ethnicity and urban subcultures, and interpretive potential.

The recently prepared archaeological research design for the Cypress reconstruction project along I-880 in Oakland identifies waste disposal as one of six themes potentially addressable using archaeological data (McIlroy 1993). The potential for large historic-era refuse deposits in the project area was first noted during preliminary documentary research. The research design includes discussion of the possibility that refuse deposits might contribute to understanding neighborhood or city-wide consumption and disposal patterns, and to consideration of the design of modern landfill sites (McIlroy 1993:207-211).

SIGNIFICANCE FINDINGS

CA-SDi-8873H does not appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A, B, C, or D. It is not associated with particular events significant in the past, nor is it associated with an important individual. It does not represent a distinctive design or the work of a master. Though studies have shown that archaeological investigations of urban dump sites may have potential for addressing important research questions, CA-SDi-8873H does not appear to retain the integrity or possess the qualities that would make it an appropriate subject for study of those questions. Therefore, it should not be considered significant under Criterion D.

Research into urban dumps has relied on the identification of the property with, on the broadest scale, a single city as the unit of study. The dump which includes the northern end of CA-SDi-8873H is said to have been used by at least three cities: Chula Vista, National City, and San Diego. It is also likely that individual, informal dumping took place at the site before its use by the Mikkelson family as a junkyard and dump. Additional mixing of deposits has taken place by its use as an industrial dump by railroad shops and slaughterhouses in the early twentieth century. Once the Mikkelsons took over, many materials were sorted out as being reusable and salable, thereby decreasing the representativeness of the sample deposited in the marsh below their headquarters. While this latter point might not necessarily preclude useful studies, the fact that the dump likely combines the qualities of industrial, commercial and individual refuse deposition reduces the potential value of a study of its contents.

Importantly, the integrity of the deposits has suffered greatly in recent decades. As discussed above, the actual business center of the Mikkelson junkyard was above the marsh in which CA-SDI-8873H has been identified. Part of that center, as well as part of the disposal site, is now under Interstate 5. Highway projects have impacted the site because the railroad line immediately east of the highway restricted widening to a westward direction. Highway construction resulted not only in a portion of the marsh being reclaimed for roadway, but in major earthmoving activities as well.

Artifacts observed in the southern portion of the site could not be clearly tied to a specific source and may be the result of sporadic dumping by one or more businesses. Several of these businesses could have dumped toxic materials in the area. Channelization of the Sweetwater River also has intruded into the central and southern marsh areas where large dredge spoils piles were accumulated and dumped along the new channel. Some of the artifacts observed in this area may have been deposited during that process, or during more general earthmoving as part of highway construction and modification. More recent wetlands restoration has resulted in the installation of a sprinkler system in the southern portion of the marsh, requiring additional trenching and disturbance. The deposits in this area do not appear to possess sufficient research potential or integrity to warrant further study.

CONCLUSIONS

CA-SDI-8873H, does not appear to be eligible for either the California Register of Historical Resources or the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A, B, C, or D. It lacks association with important events or individuals, and it has lost integrity through substantial disturbance. Because of the historical factors affecting the formation of the resource, and more recent factors affecting its integrity, the site does not appear to possess the research potential requisite for a recommendation of significance under National Register Criterion D.

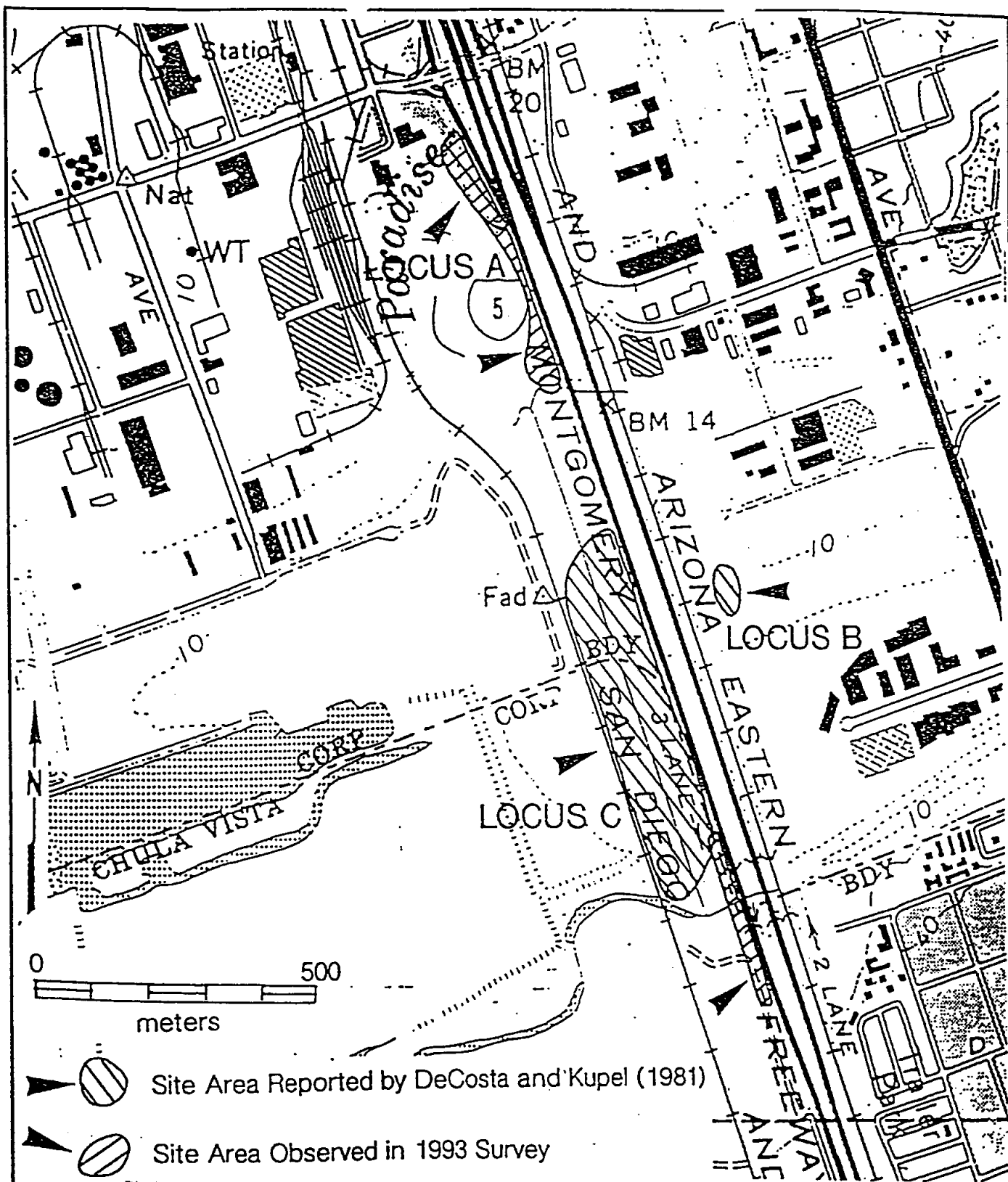


Figure 1

CA-SDI-8873H SITE MAP

11-SD-5

PM 8.6/R10.0

11-047970

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE INDUSTRIAL LANDS #1

A RESUBDIVISION OF THE S. 1/4 OF BLOCKS 217 AND 232, AND BLOCKS 218 TO 231 INCLUSIVE,

NATIONAL CITY.

AS PER MAP NUMBER 345 ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER,
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

March 10, 1922.

City and County of San Francisco, California, I, Charles E. Smith, a Notary Public in and for the said County, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original of the same as the same is on file in the office of the County Recorder, County of San Diego, State of California.

On this 28th day of February, A.D. 1922, before me, Charles E. Smith, a Notary Public in and for the said County, residing therein, duly commissioned and sworn, personally appeared Charles E. Smith, known to me to be Charles E. Smith, the Anglo-California Trust Company, and he acknowledged to me that said corporation executed the within instrument.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Notarial seal this 28th day of February, A.D. 1922, at San Francisco, State of California.

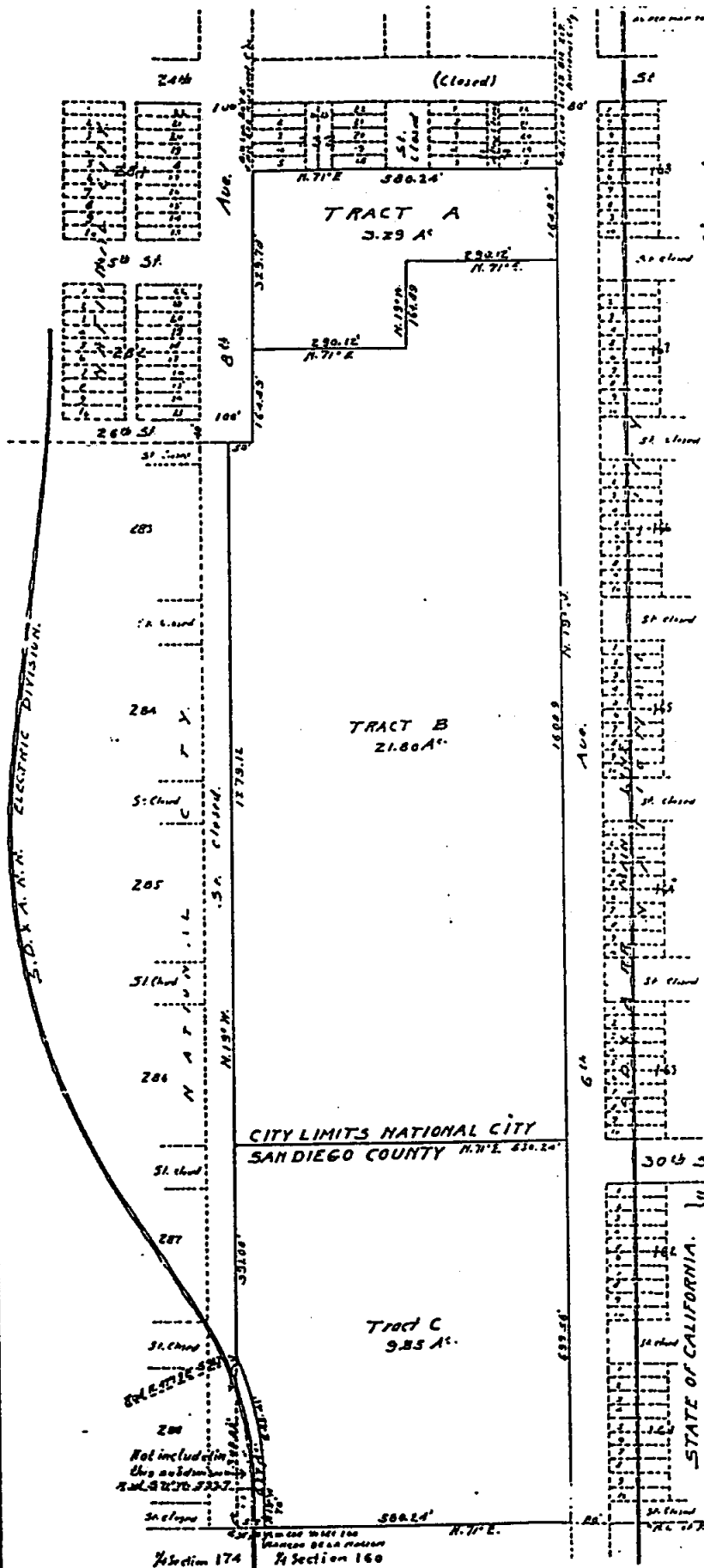
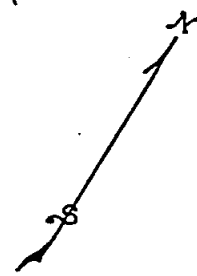


Figure 3

1922 CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE LANDS

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